

IN THE SENATE

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 101

BY RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES, TO THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND THE CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Idaho assembled in the First Regular Session of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

WHEREAS, the National Forest System, managed by the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, was established in 1907 and has grown to include approximately 192,000,000 acres of federal lands, of which more than 20,458,276 acres are in Idaho; and

WHEREAS, Congress recognized that, by its decision to permanently secure these lands in federal ownership, the counties across the United States where these lands are situated, of which thirty-four counties and one hundred fifteen public school districts are located in Idaho, would be deprived of opportunities for economic development and K-12 public educational services and of tax revenues they would otherwise receive if the lands were held in private ownership; and

WHEREAS, these same counties and public school districts have expended public funds for nearly one hundred years to provide services such as K-12 public education, road construction and maintenance, search and rescue, law enforcement, fire protection, watershed protection, and forest enhancement and conservation; and

WHEREAS, to accord a measure of compensation to these affected counties and public school districts for the critical services they provide to county residents, public school children and the general citizenry that receive benefits from these lands and for the lost economic opportunities stemming from federal ownership as compared to private ownership, Congress determined that the federal government should share with these counties a portion of the revenues the United States receives from these federal lands; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted in 1908 and subsequently amended a law that requires that twenty-five percent of the revenues derived from the National Forest System lands be paid to the states for use by counties where the lands are situated for the benefit of public schools and roads; and

WHEREAS, Idaho counties dependent on and supportive of these federal lands received and relied on shared revenues from these lands for many decades to provide essential funding for schools, road maintenance and other critical public services; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the principal source of these revenues, federal timber sales, has been sharply curtailed, and as the volume of timber sold annually from the federal lands in Idaho has decreased substantially, so too have the revenues shared with the affected counties, adversely af-

fecting funding for education, road maintenance and other public programs and services; and

WHEREAS, in the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, Congress recognized this trend and mitigated the adverse consequences by providing annual payments through federal fiscal year 2006, with a one-year extension through federal fiscal year 2007, and a subsequent four-year extension from federal fiscal year 2008 through federal fiscal year 2011, to counties across the United States, including counties in Idaho that traditionally shared in timber receipts from national forest lands; and

WHEREAS, the authority for these payments will expire in federal fiscal year 2011; and

WHEREAS, without these payments, revenue sharing is based only on actual federal timber receipts, and Idaho will lose more than \$30,086,006 million per year in payments for rural public schools and counties under Titles I and III of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, with associated losses of essential programs and services and thousands of jobs in both the government and private sectors, and Idaho will lose an additional \$4,080,943 million per year that is currently spent by counties on special conservation projects under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, for a total loss of more than \$34,166,949 per biennium, most of which are spent on programs and services that the state cannot replace; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to maintain funding for public education, road maintenance and other public services through predictable payments to the affected counties, as well as job creation in those counties and other opportunities associated with restoration, maintenance and stewardship of federal lands that benefit all citizens available under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Representatives concurring therein, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2012 that will reauthorize and extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2008 (P.L. 106-3893) for an additional ten-year period through federal fiscal year 2021, and that the Act be continued at federal fiscal year 2008 funding levels and be funded through mandatory, continuing appropriations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the Congress of the United States is unable to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act for an additional ten-year period through federal fiscal year 2021, that we urge the Congress of the United States to keep its commitment to provide funding for roads and schools in counties with federal forest land and develop an appropriate funding mechanism to provide payment for county roads and schools to mitigate the loss of property tax revenues on federal forest land within Idaho counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre-

1     sentatives of Congress, and the congressional delegation representing the  
2     State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.